

**Minutes  
Business Advisory Committee**

**March 21st, 2012**

**Newton Depot - 1123 North Main Avenue**

The Business Advisory Committee met at 11:30 a.m. on March 21st, 2012 for a lunch meeting at the Newton Depot.

**Members**

**Present:** Neal Powell      Jerry Hodge  
              Jeremy Petty     John Stiver  
              Tom Warlick     Eddie Haupt

**Members**

**Absent:** Luke Walling  
              Judy Smith  
              Javier Chavez

**Others Present:** City Manager Todd Clark, Mayor Anne Stedman

**Staff Present:** Rob Powell, Community Development Coordinator  
                      Chris Bartleson, Planning Director  
                      Jason Clay, I.T. Director

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**Item 1:**

Chairman John Stiver opened the meeting and asked for comments or corrections to the minutes of the February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 meeting. The minutes were approved after a motion by Mr. Hodge, seconded by Mr. Petty.

Chairman Stiver turned the floor over to City Manager Todd Clark, who spoke about a meeting he attended in Hickory with Hickory Communications Director Mandy Pitts and Hickory Assistant City Manager Andrea Surratt. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the recent Branding Study commissioned by the City of Hickory. The City of Hickory intends to share the results of that study with other area municipalities, the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce, the Catawba County EDC, and other area organizations. Mandy Pitts offered to make a presentation to the Newton Business Advisory Committee, and Mr. Clark suggested that the BAC invite Ms. Pitts to the next meeting. The Committee agreed that the invitation should be extended. Mr. Petty suggested that it would be good to cooperate with surrounding towns for marketing the area but that we should maintain our separate identity and keep the “Heart of Catawba County” tagline. Mr. Warlick stated that he felt we could gain much by identifying with the greater Charlotte area and that the logo choice by Hickory and Catawba County did not have any connection to the Charlotte region.

During lunch, **Rob Powell** provided comments about recent Newton real estate and business news, including a list of downtown buildings for sale.

**Item 2:            Incentive Program for the City of Newton**

**Rob Powell** presented a new draft of the Incentive Plan incorporating the changes suggested at last month’s BAC meeting. A question arose on how to calculate an incentive for a project that

was part commercial and part residential. It was agreed that the calculation of an incentive would be based only on the value of the commercial portion, and in the absence of separate tax values, the tax value would be divided into qualifying versus non-qualifying investment based on square footage of each type of space.

There was a discussion of the application process and the required time frame to process an application. It was decided that, upon approval of the policy by City Council, an application form and a process description would be written. The procedure should be designed to keep the processing time as short as possible.

Rob Powell asked if the Committee was in favor of allowing incentives for planned developments consisting only of residential units. Mr. Petty, Mr. Warlick, and Mr. Stiver all spoke in favor of keeping this incentive policy directed towards business and industrial development only. Rob Powell will make a few changes to clarify that in the paragraphs concerning planned developments and mixed-use developments.

With the above changes incorporated, Mr. Hodge moved that the incentive plan be approved by the Committee and sent to the City Manager and City attorney for review. The motion was seconded by Mr. Neal Powell and passed by a vote of the Committee.

### **Item 3: Available Properties on the Web**

**Jason Clay**, City of Newton I.T. Director, presented the new improvements to the City of Newton web pages. Jason recently added an “Available Properties” tab and a “Made in Newton” tab under the “Business” heading on the Newton web site. The “Available Properties” tab includes links to the NC Department of Commerce “Access NC” industrial and commercial properties web pages. John Stiver commented that we still needed to get the Newton Certificate of Occupancy procedure on the web site. He also noted that Lincoln County seemed to be getting some new manufacturing companies to locate in the Lincoln County Industrial Park, maybe because they have modern industrial buildings ready to be occupied.

### **Item 4: Review of Business Advisory Committee Priorities**

**Chairman John Stiver** provided copies of a Master Plan map from Salisbury and suggested to the Committee that Newton could use the Salisbury map as an example. The work of the Committee could eventually be consolidated into a map of Newton that would promote the attractions within the City, such as the many city parks, the Museum, the Depot, etc. He also handed out traffic count information that could be used to locate gateway signs as a part of a wayfinding plan. Mr. Neal Powell stated that the City had many attractive parks and that we should incorporate that fact in recruiting information. Mr. Stiver stated that recruiting brochures were needed. Mayor Anne Stedman suggested that the Committee make a recommendation concerning the 2-hour downtown parking limit. Chris Bartleson suggested district boundary signs for the North Main Historic District. Mr. Stiver stated that the priorities of the Committee should be aligned with the goals of increasing the tax base, increasing population, and encouraging people to visit Newton. (The results of the poll of Committee members on priorities is attached).

**Item 5: Meeting Schedule and Other Business**

The Committee determined that the Depot location was the preferred location for meetings. Mr. Hodge noted that a replacement may be needed for Judy Smith, who is currently unable to attend. Mayor Stedman suggested that the Committee might want to consider visiting other cities for ideas and examples. Neal Powell and John Stiver noted that Greenville, SC had a rejuvenated downtown and would be a good place to visit.

The next meeting will be held on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am at the Depot. Rob Powell is to bring photographs of the existing gateway signs for a continued discussion on wayfinding.

**Item 6: Adjournment**

With no further business, Chairman Stiver adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Powell  
Recording Secretary

## **Newton Business Advisory Committee**

2012 Priorities – by vote of Committee March 2012

### **Organizing for Development**

- ☒ Establish a Newton Business Advisory Committee—completed
- ☐ *Redevelop the Newton Brand/branding*
- ☐ Revise the purpose of the Appearance Commission

### **Retail and Commercial Recruitment and Development**

- ☐ Adopt business incentive programs for commercial redevelopment
- ☐ *Develop an inventory of all available commercial buildings/ Identify, assess, and market sites for commercial development*
- ☐ *Inventory of all business in Newton and plot on City map—development of master plan*
- ☒ Business startup assistance/permitting process enhancement/gaining a certificate of occupancy/place information on web site (*not on site yet*)
- ☐ Develop a marketing plan/showing off Newton
- ☐ *Development of a Economic Development link on the Newton web site*

### **Downtown Development**

- ☐ *Implement a downtown incentive program*
- ☐ *Take a firmer stand on code enforcement and enacting new ordinances to improve the appearance of downtown and its approaches/hire a Level I Building Inspector (not sure)*
- ☐ *Improve way-finding signage/wayfinding*
- ☐ *Regulations affecting development of second-floor residences in downtown buildings (May, June, August)*

### **Residential Development**

- ☐ Recruit residential developers
- ☐ Review parks and recreation plans to include mini-parks in downtown